

Freedom of Information

The Freedom of Information Act (2014) was enacted on 14 October 2014. It replaces the FOI Acts of 1997 and 2003. One of its key provisions is that there is no longer a fee payable when an FOI request is being made.

The Freedom of Information legislation establishes three statutory rights:

- A legal right for each person to access information held by public bodies
- A legal right for each person to have official information relating to him/her amended where it is incomplete, incorrect, or misleading.
- A legal right to obtain reasons for decisions affecting oneself.

The freedom of Information Act 2014 gives you a legal right to request any recorded information held by **An Fóram Uisce - the Water Forum** (“the Forum”). You can ask for any information you think the Forum may hold. The right only covers recorded information. Your request can be in the form of a question, but the Forum does not have to answer your question if this would mean creating a new record or giving an opinion or judgement that is not already recorded. You should clearly identify the information you want. Some information may not be given to you because it is exempt, for example because it would unfairly reveal personal details about another person.

How to make an FOI Request

You may submit a request via email to foi@nationalwaterforum.ie or via post to: FOI Officer, The Water Forum, Civic Offices, Limerick Road, Nenagh, Co. Tipperary, E45A099.

When making your request, you should:

- State that you are making your request under the Freedom of Information Act 2014.
- Give as much detail as possible to enable the information to be identified easily and, if possible, indicate the timeframe which applies to your request (e.g., between April 2022-September 2022).
- Be clear enough so that the FOI Officer understands what records are being requested.
- Supply, where you are seeking personal information, appropriate photographic identification with your request e.g., copy of driving license and utility bill.
- Include contact details to allow the FOI staff to contact you and comply with your request.

How is an FOI request processed by the Water Forum?

The Water Forum will issue an acknowledgement letter/email to you within ten (10) working days (excluding Public Holidays) of your request being received. The next stages of the process will be clearly explained in the acknowledgement letter/email.

A decision regarding your request will normally be issued by the Water Forum within twenty (20) working days of the receipt of your request. In some cases, an extension of time may be necessary to complete the decision. If this occurs while processing your request, the Forum will contact you and explain this requirement.

If you are not satisfied with the decision made, you can seek an internal review of the decision which is a complete and new review of your request by someone more senior. If following this, you are still not satisfied you can appeal this decision to the Office of the Information Commissioner.

How to appeal a decision of the Water Forum

If your request is initially refused or part-refused you may seek an internal review of this decision to a more senior officer within the Water Forum. Appeal requests must be received in writing or by email to the address above. If your request is for non-personal records a fee of €30 (or €10 in the case of a medical card holder) made payable to the Water Forum would apply at this stage.

Appeal a Decision to the Information Commissioner

The Office of the Information Commissioner (OIC) is an independent office with powers to review decisions made by the Water Forum. A request for review to the OIC for non-personal information will cost you €50.

The decision of the Information Commissioner is binding. However, you can appeal a decision to the High Court on a point of law.

Submit an Appeal

To submit an appeal, send your request in writing to:

Office of the Information Commissioner

6 Earlsfort Terrace

Dublin 2

D02W773

Tel: 01 6395658

FOI Publication Scheme

Section 8 of the FOI Act requires the Water Forum to prepare and publish a scheme concerning the publication of information about the organisation in an open and accessible manner on a routine basis. This allows for the publication or giving of records outside of FOI provided that such publication or giving of access is not prohibited by law. The scheme commits FOI bodies to make information available as part of their normal business activities in accordance with this scheme.

Our scheme is currently being prepared in accordance with the guidelines provided by the Department of Public Expenditure and Reform and will be published in due course.

For more information

The Water Forum
Freedom of Information Officer
Civic Offices
Limerick Road
Nenagh
Co. Tipperary
E45A099
Email: foi@nationalwaterforum.ie